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William Shakespeare Hall to Frank Hall, 8 August 1852

Adelaide

Augst 8th / 52

My dear Frank

After a rough voyage of three weeks we arrived here in good health. We had a very agreeable lot of chaps on board, I mean when they were not spewing, which all of them did with few exceptions, I was one of these, for having come from a Country where I had known the want of grub I thought it very imprudent of the passengers to throw theirs to the Fishs. Fred and Ander looked particularly blue & spouted so much that they looked "very like a whale", not to be wondered at when great rough chaps laid in Bed calling out for Sago. Seeing & hearing so many above & below all sick at once was most disgusting and would certainly have upset my etiquette had I not resorted to those very efficacious restoratives a "Tot & a quid". I never wish to go to Sea with Women and Children again, the former because they are all sick & prevent one from smoking below, the latter because they make such a devil of a stink.

From the best authorities we have heard accounts of the Diggins & are better pleased & more sanguine than ever, but find we should not have come quite so soon, at least people say so, we shall know more about it when we get to Melbourne. The things to be considered are these, during the Winter there are comparatively few diggers and those constantly leaving and selling off cheap so that Tools are reasonable but at the same time Flour is risen from £8 to £23 pr Bag on account of the Roads being one complete Bog, when the weather takes up Flour will be cheap & Tools risen. I hope my dear Brother you will do your best on the Farm, as the Diggins are the most complete lottery in the world — you may be working in the middle & get nothing while all around may be making hundreds a day, however there is an equal chance for all, so we might be lucky — it is some encouragement that all the Diggers intend returning and all say go & try your luck, of course there is no certainty, but should we be unsuccessful it will be great satisfaction to think we have left one at home in whom we have

the greatest confidence, on the other hand Fortune favors us we shall lose no time in sending you a share.

The murders & robberies made so much of at the Swan & here are nothing among so many, & thousands of Diggers do not hear of them till their return, hundreds leave their Tents unprotected during the day with pounds of Gold in them — the greater part of those who are robbed are people who never had so much money, get drunk in consequence and swagger about with rolls of notes as thick as — are never seen in such hands at the Swan.

This is indeed a wonderful Country, when we approached the Coast we were delighted to see numbers of Farms from the deck of Vessel with a stately range of hills in the background. We took a Pilot on board & came up the Creek or River for several miles which one could almost shoot across, at the head of which are good wharves and numbers of ships alongside. There are a number of Hotels, some better than any at the Swan near the Wharves and at the Port are Inns, Shops and Stores. There is a fine Road from the Port to the City 8½ miles & good land all the way with Farms except the first mile which is samphire ground like the Villa. The Spring Carts & Omnibus convey you up for 1s 6d in about an hour to Hindley Street where you see as many or more people than ever you will at a Fair in Perth — all walk, ride & drive as tho' they have important business in hand. The display of goods in the shops is excellent but the buildings are not generally good, there are however some which surpass any at the Swan altogether, the Shops and Stores are all adjoining, & the Lanthorns which the Publicans are obliged to keep are almost sufficient to light the street well — all around the City is good land, slightly undulating with scarcely any Timber except here and there where it has been preserved, many of the Hills are without but covered with Grass. The Hills I speak of are a range running the same as our ones but rather more lofty — you must remember we are here at the most pleasant time of year when every spot is covered with good feed even in Towns, in Summer I suppose it presents the appearance of a brickfield with clouds of dust.

We shall not stop here long not more than a week from this & are sorry to lose any time even a day, but did not think it advisable to go on immediately as the Winter commences a month later than at the

Swan or this. We are staying at the Phoenix, Robt Hall's whose charge is one Guinea per week each but he kindly took us at 15s each having known us at the Swan. You must not neglect to pay the Interest to Luke, £5 in October and £5 in April he will have the other £10 in hand from Dyett's surplus Rent, if you are compelled you must sell Henry's or other Stock to make up the money. Luke has behaved in every respect like a Brother to us & lent us £30 without asking or interest, we really stood in need of this as we had little more than £50 among us when we left. Should you require advice in the affair with Luke or any other matter of business he would be glad to be of service to you at any time & you may depend on him as you w[oul]d on a brother.

I hope when you go to Town you will never play at Cards as a young man by practice gets a relish for it, tho' I have often played & *never* lost any thing I consider it a bad practice, if you wish to say years hence as you could now that you never were the worse for liquor you will seldom treat & never be treated to Grog as I am confident it makes drunkards of many. I am happy to say in this matter I speak as I think & not from experience for you know I seldom took more than did me good at the Swan, & though on board we had plenty of everything to drink we were all very abstemious, *even Henry*, we drink scarcely any thing here & do not care if we never saw it. I hope if we are not successful at the Diggins we may find lucrative employment, so as to be able to assist you speedily, of this be assured. A man came in the other day with a half pound nugget which was first of the size I had seen. R Hall has a bag with about 8 lbs in which he got at the Diggins, such things are quite common. Such numbers of people leaving & all taking money with them in Gold or Silver have left the place almost without, & the Banks have issued 5s notes to meet the demand, Sovereigns are at 4¾ pr cent premium & Silver about the same but with Bullion the banks are almost overflowing. An escort overland will be in here in a day or two, last time it brought a Ton & quarter.

Try and improve yourself & write as soon as we let you know our whereabouts. With kind love to Papa & Mama

Believe me
Your Affectn Brthr
W S Hall

Remember me kindly to Stewards, Davis, Middletons, Capt Hester & all who may inquire after me.

Tell Bob I shall not fail to write to him an account of the Diggins and give him and Edward my kind regards and love to Laetitia, & Theodosia